

7. The Peasant Question: A Paradox

Although the libertarian element was very strong within the syndicalist movement, the hard line taken by anarchists on the question of collectivization was not so easy for revolutionary syndicalists to adopt. Anarchists thought in terms of future apocalypses; syndicalists had to concern themselves with immediate economic and organizational demands. The anarchist message reflected the assumption that the audience was an unconscious mass. The union members who helped shape syndicalism's position on the peasant question were frequently men from the provinces with strong rural ties and/or peasant backgrounds. They knew from experience that the peasantry was neither a mass, nor collectively mute. Most important, anarchist populism remained squarely positioned in the realm of theory. For syndicalists, the exigencies of left-wing politics dictated that the peasant question be framed with very definite goals in mind.

In the beginning the formulation of syndicalism's rural offensive was largely conditioned by the struggle to remain autonomous from the party socialists. Later it became a rallying point between the CGT and the FBT. Syndicalists were also aware that the influence of the countryside was increasing, and they feared the manipulation of the peasantry by politicians of both the right and left. Irrespective of the political issues, however, the peasant problem was one that would have to be addressed by the unions. Syndicalists knew that what happened to the industrial worker was as much determined by rural activity as by capitalist machinations.

Before industrialization, town and country workers might remain distinct entities, united only in a common concern for bountiful harvests. With the advent of machines, peasant influx to the factories became an added factor, along with food prices, directly affecting the city workers' economic well-being. Increasingly, the rural population figured into the working-class struggle. Peasant ignorance nourished the Church. Politicians scrambled with one another to court the country with material favors in order to maintain themselves in power; so peasant greed

buttressed the state. But when workers sought by collective effort to use direct action to alleviate their sufferings, they were dispatched by guns placed by the government in the hands of peasant soldiers. Unionists became increasingly aware that the course of the social revolution rested upon the ability to win the peasantry over to syndicalism. That goal was severely hampered by the fact that revolutionary syndicalism, unlike party socialism, possessed neither a single overriding ideology nor a concrete political forum. Without either of these, it was exceedingly difficult to formulate a clearly defined policy capable of overcoming the mutual suspicion existing between city and country. Nevertheless, syndicalism's rural offensive was an important weapon in the struggle for survival; of the worker, the unions, and of the socialist revolution.

GUESDIST POPULISM DESIGNED TO LEAD AT NANTES

The discussion on the subject of the peasantry at the Nantes congress of unions in 1894 provides a classic example of the way in which syndicalists used the peasant question, as they had often used the woman question, for purposes of political expediency. The left was in disarray; a multitude of sects were in contention. For those who had pressed for the meeting, the congress was intended to provide the arena for doing battle against the party socialists. As noted in the first chapter, the major weapon was to be the issue of the general strike, a principle gaining increasing acceptance among anarchists, Allemanists, unionists, and bourse activists. The vote on the general strike was intended to serve as a shibboleth separating the issues of economic activism from party opportunism. Although they had opposed the convening of the congress, the Guesdists also came prepared with a program that would serve as a rallying point. Unlike the issue of the general strike, which was an instrument of divisiveness between peasants and workers, the Guesdists declared, the agrarian program adopted by the POF was designed to be a positive platform on which to unite city and country.

Pelloutier opened the discussion on the peasant question, the first order of business, by reading a petition sent to the FBT from a group of farmworkers in the Loire-Inférieure. The workers were trying to use all legal means at their command to win a dispute with their employer. They had sought the intervention of the Socialist Party deputies; they were now appealing to the congress for a vote of solidarity. The farmworkers' request provided the occasion for all to wax eloquently on the theme of unity, and on the fact that the traditional antagonisms existing between agrarian and industrial workers were disappearing.

All agreed that the workers in the factories and in the fields were bound together in a commonality of suffering and exploitation. The recognition of that unity, the delegates contended, must serve as the stimulus for working together

to establish a just society based on collective ownership of property. The task would not be easy, noted Davin of Algeria. Large proprietors had taken advantage of the 1884 law to unionize the countryside. Their program of mutual assistance was attracting a large following. Further, they had made their organizations centers for examining those questions in which the peasantry was interested: local concerns and the problems of agriculture in general. There was also the question of the peasantry itself. Country folk were naturally suspicious. Unlike the city workers, peasants were not accustomed to meeting together to share their grievances and debate strategy. It was therefore incumbent upon the militant city worker, "the elect," according to Davin, to launch a propaganda offensive in the countryside. The organized workers must point out the disparity existing between the honest worker and the parasites who appropriated the peasant's labor and lived a life of ease. Militants must also preach the message that the solution to the desperate situation faced by peasant smallholders lay in collectivism. Collective exploitation would allow the farmer to realize more directly the benefits of his own labor because there would be no financial burdens for him to bear except nominal costs of operation. A vigorous contact with the peasantry would make the agrarian laborer realize that the interests of all workers were the same: "to divest themselves of the hornets that live at their expense." (1)

The scandalous exploitation of the field hands was so flagrant that they were deserting the countryside to live in the city, declared Emile Noel of Bordeaux. The unions must recruit country workers, thereby convincing the peasantry that socialism "is not the bête-noire their bourgeois deputy or squire priest had made of it." But the farmers must be told the truth: the course of economic evolution would result in the disappearance of the small proprietor. The revolution could not be forestalled, Noel said. (2)

Victor Chiron presented a report on the "Travailleurs des campagnes," formulated by the Circle of Social Studies of Brest, of which he was a member. Because of the importance of the peasantry's social function and of the injustice and misery of their situation, the study group had undertaken an in-depth investigation of the special problems of the farmers. The guiding principle of the Brest group was that each person had a right to the exclusive use of the products of his labor, and that no one had the right to the fruits of another's labor. The best social organization was collectivism, which was not incompatible with individual property, because in each system the individual remained "absolute master of the equivalent of his work." Collective appropriation did not conflict with individual liberty, Chiron insisted, since that form of organization was intended "to rescue human individuality from the economic shackles inhibiting the free development" of every man. But since the social transformation could not occur all at once, Chiron concluded, his group called for the adoption of a

series of progressive reforms aimed at improving the lot of the workers. The reforms suggested were virtually the same as those comprising the agrarian package of the POF.(3)

Delegates were in complete accord on the need for a rural offensive and in support of a program of agrarian reform and collective expropriation of the land. Martin of the Ceramic Workers' Union, suggested the ground might be prepared for the peasants' acceptance of collectivism by a vigorous campaign waged against the greatest curse in society, the spirit of individualism.(4) Shoemaker Louis Trévaux posited another way to achieve collectivism, designed to benefit urban workers and farmers alike. Young people would be forced to attend agricultural school until the ages of eighteen or twenty, after which they would be given land to farm under the careful scrutiny of the farm unions. The land parceled out to the young farmers would have been expropriated in the same way as the land used by the public utility companies, he declared.(5) The plan offered something for everyone. Young people would be kept on the farms and out of the job market; labor unions would be assigned an important task in society; and collectivism would be undertaken gradually but surely. Gabriel Farjat of the Lyon bourse was less concerned about collectivism than about articulating a program of practical agrarian reform. His suggestions included the institution in the cantons of free medical and pharmaceutical services, the creation of hunting preserves, with the right to hunt extended to all, and the indemnification of reservists called up by the state.(6)

The resolution resulting from the lengthy debate on the peasant question was submitted by Charles Brunellière, representing naval rigging workers from Nantes. It noted the deepening misery suffered by the farmers; it called for an end to the competition between city and country induced by the existing regime, and urged that a vigorous recruiting campaign be carried out by the bourses and unions. While this general resolution, unanimously adopted by the delegates, appears to have been nothing more than a bland statement of principle and a call for solidarity, the detailed reports submitted by the Marseille bourse and the Dijon Fédération des Bourses, also adopted, were duplicates of the agricultural program of the POF.(7)

The discussion of the peasant question at Nantes illuminates the fact that the delegates were more concerned about maintaining ideological integrity than in dealing with the real problems of the countryside. An economic revolution was in the process of destroying the peasant's way of life, one based on individualism and private property, the delegates concluded. Although the capitalists were the culprits, and the working class was equally victimized by events with the peasantry, the conscious workers would support a few interim economic reforms intended to alleviate individual suffering, but not slow the process. The message of sympathy and the offer of solidarity were hardly designed to comfort the farmer. Only

a few suggestions were made to cast their message in themes guaranteed to strike a responsive chord in the countryside. These included the expropriation of the large landowners and the reaffirmation of hunting privileges, part of the peasants' patrimony from the Revolution of 1789.

This apparent inability to speak to the needs of the peasantry demonstrated a general lack of understanding by the delegates of their rural constituency, to be sure. But more important, what the discussions reveal is that the peasant question was clearly intended to be a medium of the internal power struggle between economic and party socialists for control of the working-class movement. The theme of urban-rural harmony was regarded as a unifying one among the factions and a counter to the divisive issue of the general strike. As it turned out, Guesdists could take cold comfort in the professed accord on the agrarian question. During the ensuing bitter arguments over the issue of the general strike, the Guesdists attempted to use the peasant question as a defense against their attackers. The delegates had just committed themselves unreservedly to the task of rapprochement between town and country, noted the Guesdists. Yet they were now considering adopting a utopian scheme that would weaken the working-class movement by losing the support of the "pitchforks and scythes." (8) The tactic did not work. When the resolution in support of the general strike was passed, the Guesdists walked out of the meeting.

Throughout the convention, it was apparent that Pelloutier was angling for delegate support for FBT leadership of the working-class organization. His campaign was futile. (9) Following the Nantes meeting, Pelloutier turned his attention over the next few years until his death to strengthening the bourses and the FBT. Recruiting activity in the countryside was stepped up. (10) Pelloutier even supported the idea of changing the name of some member FBT unions to "Unions of Workers of the Soil and of the Supplementary Industries." (11) By placing the primary emphasis on farmworkers, Pelloutier hoped to attract large numbers of rural workers to the fold. His efforts in the countryside achieved some organizational success: while he lived the FBT was strong enough to maintain its autonomy as a parallel organization to the CGT.

THE RURAL OFFENSIVE AS THE MEANS TO SYNDICALIST UNITY

In the ensuing years the peasant question was frequently raised as a useful point of accord between the unions and the bourses. At the founding congress of the CGT in 1895, the agrarian question was the second item on the agenda. Its inclusion was guided less by the activities of the party socialists and more as a means of welding the bourse delegates to the new Confederation, particularly in the face of Pelloutier's boycott of the meeting.

Then in December 1899, as noted in an earlier chapter, an attempt was made at a General Congress of Socialists in Paris to weld all leftist groups, including corporate organizations such as the FBT, into a unified socialist party. The FBT declined the invitation and reasserted its autonomy within the CGT. Perhaps this overture, which pointed out the need to garner the support of the bourse members, prompted the Confederation to reexamine the peasant question at its 1900 congress. Delegates were also inspired by the need to increase union membership. Women were a hitherto untapped source of recruits. So too was the peasantry, as the FBT was demonstrating. In order to launch a successful rural offensive, a viable agrarian program was needed. In formulating that program, the CGT found itself on the horns of a dilemma. The Nantes program of 1894 was attractive to the peasantry, but it was the agrarian platform of the POF. A pro forma adoption would smack of "me-too-ism," and leave the CGT trailing in the shadow of the party socialists. With the political left again making forays on the unions, the need to delineate the differences between electoral and economic socialism became exceedingly important. The socialist politicians were opportunist and reformist, the syndicalists reasoned. The CGT must stand squarely on the side of revolution. The dilemma was that it was a communist revolution the unions were preaching, a message repulsive to the peasants. Further, unless the CGT could offer the rural population some hope of immediate economic reform, peasants would continue to remain aloof from revolutionary syndicalism. The obvious solution was for the CGT to concentrate its propaganda efforts on the agrarian proletariat--the landless peasant who worked for wages. As the delegates were to learn, the peasant question in France defied easy answers.

At Paris Paul Fribourg threw down the gauntlet. As an Allemanist he was frustrated by the fact that every time the left attempted to formulate propaganda for the countryside, it was confounded in its efforts, either by electoral preoccupations or by the inability to get past the question of the definition of small versus large proprietorship. Quantity of property was not an issue, Fribourg exclaimed; property ownership was. Distinction between ownership and nonownership was not a matter of contention, but an obvious fact. Syndicalism's task was to organize those farmworkers who owned nothing.(12)

Delegate Treich disagreed. The large proprietors were extending their grip on the smallholders by sponsoring agricultural exhibits and agrarian unions. These were the real enemies. In the Limousin, the small property holder was generally deeply in debt to the giant landlords. But although the small farmers were fearful of taking any action that might cut them off from future financing, the pettyholders regarded these giants as their enemies. This was a natural milieu for union organization, declared Treich. Syndicalism's task was to make propaganda, not

employ grand formulas.(13)

The debate that followed centered on trying to reach an accord on these two positions. On the one hand, delegates argued that it was impossible to assess when a smallholder was a capitalist exploiter, and called for the exclusion of all property holders from the unions. On the other hand, numerous delegates argued that in the countryside the ownership of property was not an automatic equation with capitalism. Syndicalism should expand its power base by unionizing the smallholders as well as the propertyless farmworkers.

Delegate Bourguier, a weaver from Rheims, stated that the unions must stop haggling over the definition of property, since no one could adequately determine where an employer or a proprietor began or ended. The small-property farmer could not be classed as being truly exploited since, in Bourguier's opinion, it was too easy for even the marginal farmer to become an exploiter.(14) Delegate Paillot agreed that this was not the place to discuss the plight of the smallholders. If these people felt victimized by outside forces, they could form their own organizations of defense. If they were not careful, Paillot warned, syndicalists would soon find themselves arguing for the formation of unions for small merchants and industrialists.(15)

The decision to dismiss all property owners from union activity was not so simple, delegate Renier reminded the audience. He had been raised in a rural district in the Nord and was intimately aware of the problems occurring in the countryside. In the area where he grew up, farmers raised crops for the local distillery where his father was employed. In the early days, the large number of smallholders served as a buffer against the big landlords, so the lot of the farmhand was infinitely better than at present. Over the course of two decades, however, the distillery had centralized its holdings, and was now an immense farm owning more than two-thirds of the property in the area. Many of the small proprietors had become agrarian proletarians living a wretched existence because the large landowners, farmers, and sugar manufacturers could impose whatever conditions they wished on the smallholders who produced for them.(16)

Those who wished to include the peasant smallholder appeared to be in the majority. Another Allemanist, Albert Bourderon, spoke on the issue. He too had come from the land. He had worked with his father on a farm until the age of twenty-five. Then he became a cooper, but continued to work in the rural districts before coming to Paris. He knew that it was impossible to equate property ownership with exploitation. Too many peasants owned a hectare of land and a mortgaged shack. They worked for themselves during part of the year and then as day laborers on the sharecroppers' farms. These people were the true proletarians, Bourderon said, while the métayers and fermiers who harvested hundreds of sacks of wheat and employed three or four workers were not. The marginal farmer, like the day laborer, was as

exploited as any industrial worker. The distinction between proletariat and proprietor must be based on the particular situation, Bourderon concluded; and must not be measured according to the simple distinctions holding sway in the city.(17) Carpenter Jean Voillot agreed. Smallholders in his province worked their plots of ground for seven or eight months a year just for the luxury of producing some carrots and cabbage. To earn the money to buy the wheat to make their bread, noted Voillot, these farmers then had to spend four months of every year chopping wood for wages. One could hardly call these people capitalists.(18)

Those arguing for the inclusion of the small peasant owner in the definition of exploited then took another tack, framing their position on the basis of what a strong syndicalist organization in the countryside would mean to the city workers. Bourderon reminded the delegates that it was the rural worker who competed with the city worker. The main reason for the rural exodus so devastating to the urban worker was the deep-seated belief that the city was the place to earn enough money to enable the landless farmer to return to the countryside and buy his little plot of land. Since childhood, declared Bourderon, the peasant was educated to the belief that land ownership was a worthy goal. The conscious workers must bring the true message of communism to their rural brethren.(19) Emile Pouget agreed that the work of reeducation was needed. But the task was difficult. The peasant was naturally mistrustful of anything that came from the city: merchants sold him adulterated goods; politicians sold him false promises; militants rebuked him for his longing for a plot of ground. The day the militants went to the country with nothing to sell the peasant except the message that there was a higher form of liberty, and that his individual property provided him with only a false freedom, then the peasant would easily accept the ideas of association and collectivism, said Pouget.(20)

The question of educating the countryside was a critical one, equal in importance to the issue of who might serve as worthy agents of propaganda to the rural masses. Numerous suggestions were offered. The unions could sponsor industrial fairs, said one delegate, at which the syndicalist message could be disseminated. Union members whose infants were wetnursed in the countryside might also have beneficial contacts, he pointed out. The military was another excellent medium for propaganda. Young union members might serve as hosts to soldiers stationed in their areas. Unionists in the reserve could also carry syndicalism to the peasants serving in their outfits.(21)

Several delegates even suggested the importance of small property holders in the union's propaganda offensive. Organization could occur only as long as there existed a certain degree of independence among the potential union members. Without the aid of enlightened spokesmen, most farmworkers would not even know when union meetings were being held. Delegate Mazas of Montpellier gave a more

pointed example of the importance of the smallholders to unionism. A group of militants had gone into the smaller communes preaching syndicalism. The results were positive: the agricultural workers in his area received their first pay raise in ten years. But after the harvest, some unscrupulous employers attempted to lower their workers' wages again. A "little strike" changed the proprietors' minds. That strike would not have succeeded, Mazas recounted, if the small proprietors had not served the farmhands as intermediaries.(22)

The peasant question, as the delegates were learning, offered no easy answers. Unable to arrive at a specific definition of property holder, the Paris delegates agreed to include in their definition of rural proletariat those farmers who owned property but worked it themselves.(23) Without the electoral experience as a device for raising consciousness and counting their converts, the only medium syndicalists had was their message. And that message had to be broadcast as far as possible. The offer of union membership and the promise to represent the agrarian workers' cause had to be inclusive rather than exclusive. With this realization, the Paris delegates accepted the fact that they must pursue practical measures rather than employ ideological formulas.

THE GENERAL STRIKE AND THE NEED FOR RURAL SUPPORT

After 1900 there was a strong drive within the FBT to seek fusion with the CGT. Pelloutier died in 1901. The party socialists seemed on the point of reaching a common accord. The bulk of the CGT meeting at Lyon that year was devoted to changing the Confederation's statutes in order to allow the FBT to enter as an autonomous organization. The fight over rules left no time to devote to the peasant question. But at the next congress, held in Montpellier in 1902, delegates turned their attention to other matters, not the least of which concerned the peasantry. The placing of the peasant question on the CGT's agenda is not surprising, given the fact that the congress was held in the center of wine country. For the first time, farmworkers' unions were represented at the congress. But from an organizational standpoint, the attention paid to the peasant question served many needs: membership rolls were still important; so too was the need to cement the bonds of fusion with the FBT. With Pelloutier gone, the FBT had voted to join the Confederation. As a means, perhaps, of acknowledging officially the importance of the FBT, the bourses were assigned the job of handling agrarian affairs for the Confederation. In addition, a new element had become important at the congress: the general strike. A close alliance with the rural organizations would provide a means of convincing skeptics--both of the towns and the countryside--that the general strike was not a utopian scheme, but very much within the realm of practical

possibility. More pointed was the realization that the general strike would never succeed if the city workers had a hostile countryside behind them.

Members of the agrarian unions aggressively participated in the discussion, losing no time in stressing the need for solidarity. Describing himself as "a modest cultivator" and "a new recruit to the syndicalist army," Baptiste Milhaud brought salutations from the Syndicat des Cultivateurs de Mèze (Hérault). Peasants were finally becoming aware that they were being duped by the politicians and the large landowners, although propaganda was still needed to bring the peasants to unionism.(24) Delegate Charles Farras, a former farmworker who had been fired for his union activity, pointed out the increasing mutualism existing between city and country workers. Without the support of the industrial workers, the agrarian unions were helpless in their struggle for reform. He cited a recent example of a strike made by a group of workers against the imposition of a ten-hour day. The employer relented in the face of the harvesters' show of strength. But the owner well knew that because the workers were not firmly organized or affiliated with any outside power, when winter came he would be able to make good his threat to lower wages and recover his losses.(25)

The agrarian workers needed the power of the industrial unions, to be sure. But numerous delegates agreed with Farras and elaborated upon the importance of the peasantry to unionism's successful march toward revolution. Amédée Bousquet noted that the comrades who belonged to his foodworkers' union were nearly all drawn from the country proletariat. They had been "pushed onto the city's pavement by the imperious necessity to live," he explained, "but they had not lost their memories of their infancy nor forgotten the sufferings they had had to endure." Despite their separation from the centers of action, despite their sometime ignorance, the rural population was nevertheless a formidable force. "We should recall that in 1789 [the peasants] were the ones who burned the farms and chateaux," said Bousquet. With education and assistance from the CGT, the peasants would be ready to march with the city workers in the general strike.(26) Leatherworker Bouchet reported on the dangers inherent in neglecting the peasantry. The rightist unions were making strong advances in the countryside, he warned. In 1884 there were five such unions. In 1900 that figure had grown to 2,204, with over one-half million adherents.(27)

The need to root out reaction in the countryside was an important theme at the Montpellier congress. It was at this meeting that the principle of the general strike was adopted as the primary weapon in the revolutionary arsenal. Two lengthy presentations--one by Milhaud and the other by Bouchet--dealt with the nature of society following the revolution, a form of speculation seldom engaged in by syndicalists. To dwell on the particular attributes of post-revolutionary society had always been dismissed as

utopian musings. One can only guess the reasons for this deviation. Was it to provide the delegates with an all-encompassing unity of vision? Would that unity gain the enthusiastic support of all for the general strike as a means by which to bring the future society into existence? Perhaps. The more prosaic aspect of these two presentations, however, is that both speakers made it abundantly clear that the future could not be realized without the support of the bourses and the peasantry.

Milhaud's report, presented on behalf of his agricultural workers, centered on two questions: how best to organize the unions to replace the capitalist class, and how to assure production, exchange, and consumption during and after the revolution. To prepare the countryside for the general strike, Milhaud reported, the farm unions would have to work closely with the bourses because of the need for the professional instruction this latter organization could provide. As for the future after the revolution, workers need have nothing to fear, Milhaud assured the delegates. The soil was rich, the products of the fields and vines were abundant. With no monopolies or famine, the prospect of economic well-being for all was a certainty. The very simplicity of life lent assurance to the fact that only the most elemental administrative machinery would be needed in future society. Milhaud could foresee only two such organizations: a Commission of Statistics and Labor Allotment and a Study Commission, each of which would perform functions currently carried on by the bourses.(28) The data presented by Bourchet in his report were extremely complex, but the point was the same: both the bourses and the peasantry were essential to the course of the revolution and the establishment of a just society.(29)

The resolutions passed by the delegates after such voluminous debate on the peasant question were standard. The issue of collectivization was muted, although the delegates vowed that the CGT would dedicate itself anew to the task of organizing the rural proletariat in defense of its demands. One of the last proposed resolutions was that offered by Lelorrain of the tobacco workers, who called for the establishment of a war chest to carry out the rural offensive. To the penurious union members, the question of additional dues had an effect similar to baiting a bull with a red cape. After a brief discussion, the congress rejected Lelorrain's motion and adopted the one of metallurgist Eugène Reisz, which suggested that unions located in rural areas carry on the educational process by inviting peasants to attend their meetings. Then there would be no special propaganda treasury needed.(30) Apparently the CGT was committed to the task of unionism in the countryside, but not if it were going to cost money!

Despite the injunction made at Montpellier to place the peasant question on the agenda of the following congress, and in the face of the violent strike activity among farmworkers in 1904, the CGT gave no official attention to the peasant question at its next congress.(31) Instead, the

delegates to the Bourges congress of 1904 were too involved in resolving the struggle between reformists and revolutionaries, a fight in which the peasantry did not figure. The degree to which the rural elements were exempted from the larger issues of confederal organization was revealed in the protest registered by Hippolyte Mauger over the way the deliberations were going. A representative of seven woodcutters' unions, Mauger declared his disgust over the fact that the delegates were ignoring the important issues. Peasant delegations had come to this congress to make contact with their comrades in industry, he declared, and to offer their collaboration on such vital questions as the eight-hour day and retirement. The peasant question demanded the attention of the unions. But for four or five days, Mauger scolded, the delegates had engaged in "sterile discussions" of a personal nature rather than of general interest. He and his companions urged the assembly to return to vital issues. After giving Mauger a round of unanimous bravos, the delegates stopped haggling and took up the question, not of the peasantry, but of the eight hour day. (32)

COMMUNIST HARMONY BETWEEN CITY AND COUNTRY WORKERS

With the left safely in control of the unions after 1904, delegates to the CGT congresses had virtually nothing to say on the peasant question until the 1912 congress. (33) In the interim, the issue continued to be addressed in La Voix du Peuple. The most important series of articles to appear in that paper was written by H. Beaujardin, a collaborator on Emile Pouget's Père Peinard. The series, entitled "Lettres d'un paysan," and running primarily during the first half of 1901, contained a twofold message: to point out the twin dangers of proprietary syndicalism and party socialism, and to outline the natural revolutionary tendencies already inherent in the peasantry.

The first article opened with a literary salute "in the fraternal agape to the coming of a better world" designed to cheer the hearts of those who labored in the vineyards. The first year of the new century had been a good harvest year, noted Beaujardin. It was time for the city and country proletariat to fill their glasses and drink together often. "After having clinked glasses with a comrade," said Beaujardin, "one has more resources for the daily tasks and future struggle. . . . The good juice of the vine sharpens ideas and activates energy," Beaujardin counseled. That energy must be turned toward the task of reaching common accord. If times were bad in the city, they were likewise bad in the country. If the city worker were out of work or paid low wages, he could not buy the farmers' goods. If, on the other hand, farmers could not sell their wheat, they were unable to buy the manufactured goods produced in the city. Therefore, all must drink together for "the day when communist harmony replaces proprietary competition."

Workers of the factories and fields must depend upon one another for their liberation. The mixed syndicats may have brought some tangible monetary results for the peasantry, Beaujardin conceded, but one must not be beguiled by a few material benefits. These associations were under the control of large landowners, lawyers, and bureaucrats, and were ultraconservative organizations. Nor did the radical or socialist politicians hold the key to improving the peasant's lot. Thirty years of the Republic had brought no real advancement to the countryside, he noted. The few material benefits were pa try in the face of the multiplication of the bureaucracy and the intrusion of capitalism into the countryside. The social revolution could never be achieved by electoral combinations, Beaujardin asserted; it could come only by means of the general strike.

In this series Beaujardin constantly sought to articulate the revolution in the language of the countryside. To those who complained of peasant parochialism and of their independent nature, Beaujardin pointed out that these were virtues compatible with the success of revolution. After all, he reminded his readers, future society would be one based on the grouping of free individuals. Further, the commune in the countryside, like the syndicat, would become the foyer of a new life. In another article, Beaujardin implicitly hailed the general strike as the counterpart of the jacquerie, since the aim of both was to expropriate all privileges. He further noted that communalism was a natural mode of existence among the peasantry, and that the communal society of the future had its seeds in the agrarian past. Nor was the peasant's attachment to his individual holdings atavistic. The proprietary feelings held by the farmer was an indication to Beaujardin that the peasants wanted well-being and independence, which at this stage of evolution, they had come to associate with private property. Eventually the peasant would come to the realization that true well-being could only be achieved in communal possession.

In the final article of his series, Beaujardin responded to charges made by Jaurès, who had asserted that the syndicalists' reliance on the general strike was a chimera. One could overthrow governments, perhaps, but not make a spontaneous economic revolution, particularly when there were too many defenders of capitalism, such as the army, with which to contend. Most futile of all, Jaurès had concluded, was syndicalism's encouragement of the "morcellement" of power. Revolution can occur only when power is centralized, not dispersed and fragmented.

In answer to these assertions, Beaujardin pointed out that it was not necessary for revolutionary consciousness to permeate the masses before the new order could be brought forth. Even "the inert and unconscious" would support a revolution to improve their material existence. The old animosities between the city and country would disappear

once the peasantry saw the large numbers of city-manufactured products made available to them. As for the army, syndicalism was preparing the way for its emasculation through propaganda. History has demonstrated, Beaujardin pointed out, that the army is not always a bastion of the 'status quo, but is often the force for revolution. Jaurès' concept of power was also faulty, due undoubtedly to his "political preoccupation." Centralization of power might be useful in overthrowing a parliament or a class, declared Beaujardin, struggles that change no basic social relations. But centralization was useless for carrying out a revolution that had nothing but a social end. The dispersion of forces Jaurès had derided was just what would make the general strike invincible, continued Beaujardin, for it would carry out a revolution, not decided in Paris, but involving the whole country. It was because the impending revolution was unlike any other, concluded Beaujardin, "that the general strike is necessary." (34)

Throughout the following few years, although the articles appealing to the peasantry were few and far between, the editors of La Voix du Peuple did not ignore the countryside completely. Rather than publishing outright propaganda pieces, such as those written by Beaujardin, the pages of the CGT's paper were devoted to recording strike activity and the growth of unions. Unlike the party socialists and the syndicats agricoles of the right, revolutionary syndicalism's channels of communication with the countryside were limited to the bourses and a few radical unions. Therefore, any proliferation of peasant strikes and demonstrations, even if not directed by the CGT, was regarded as a sign that syndicalism's message of direct action was penetrating the countryside. In 1902 Pierre Hervier asserted that union propaganda had produced "a flourishing union" in the Cher. (35) The following year, Louis Niel reported on the steady progress of peasant syndicalism, noting that some meetings were attended by four hundred people. This was an indication to Niel that the message of unionism was being well-received by the peasantry, particularly the farm women who were often the first to suffer from the inadequacy of their husbands' wages. (36)

The increase in strike activity, as noted in La Voix du Peuple, was regarded as an optimistic sign to syndicalists. In 1904 Charles Desplanques reported on a peasant revolt in the Aude. After being fined 2,500 francs for taking lumber from the forest of a large proprietor, the peasants of the village armed themselves with their hunting rifles and kept everyone from entering their commune. The rebellion was finally mediated to a peaceful conclusion by the local prefect and deputies. But as Desplanques joyfully pointed out, the demonstration by these unorganized farmers was a certain indication that the peasantry was "very close to the ideal of liberty [already possessed] by organized workers." (37) That same year Louis Niel reported that the increase in peasant strike activity was a positive sign for

city workers, who had always feared that any effort on their part to realize a new social order might be checked by "the abstention of their peasant brothers." The rounds of strikes in the country should give the urban worker "courage and hope." (38)

In 1907 the editors reported on the peasant strikes in the Midi, in which one of the first to be killed was a militant of the Narbonne bourse. Despite the tragedy, it was evident that syndicalism had penetrated into the countryside: a regiment of the Seventeenth of the Line had crossed their rifles and refused to fire on the strikers. Those peasant soldiers, concluded the reporter, had received the union's message "that the bourgeoisie only maintain the army for war in the interior." (39) Two years later the recorded activity of another group of strikers again sounded the message of the mutual dependence existing between farmers and workers. Unionism had arrived in 1899 to Lavelanet, a town of forty factories, explained textile worker Delsaut, mostly making draperies and employing the majority of the town's 4,000 inhabitants. The unions had carried on a vigorous campaign against militarism and in support of the eight-hour day. The industrialists had ordered a lockout in order to squelch the growing militancy among the workers. Although this action occurred in midwinter, the unionists were not frightened because they knew they could call upon their peasant neighbors. The farmers opened their silos and advanced them 80,000 kilos of potatoes, thereby providing the strikers with the resources to hold out for six months. The workers were still on strike in April, when the bourgeoisie finally capitulated! (40)

THE DARKER SIDE OF THE PEASANT QUESTION

Despite these assertions of progress in the development of peasant consciousness and of the steady growth of mutual accord between factory worker and farmworker, it became increasingly apparent that the darker side of the peasant question nevertheless persisted. A growing number of syndicalists voiced despair over the fact that despite those decades of "going to the country," the returns seemed minuscule when compared to the efforts. Employer-employee unions continued to flourish, thereby guaranteeing the continuation of an entrenched conservatism among the peasantry and a deeper commitment to maintain the status quo. (41) Additionally, the Socialist Party's overtures in the countryside appeared to be reaping a rich harvest. (42) The socialist principle of collectivism, said Léopold Bernard in 1911, was interpreted by the peasantry to mean "the increase of the small proprietor at the expense of the large." To Bernard the SFIO's failure to correct the farmer's misunderstanding of the party program was being translated into party victories in the rural elections. (43)

Worse, socialism was a pernicious force that actually coopted peasant militancy, according to Victor Griffuelhes in his 1911 Voyages révolutionnaires. In the very heartland of revolutionary agrarian syndicalism--Montpellier, Béziers, and Narbonne--where the first agrarian syndicalist congress was held, where the first federation of agrarian syndicalists was formed, in an area where there were thousands of wage farmers, the population had become so victimized by "democratic fictions" and the "bavardage" of political promises that they were incapable of any long-term combat. "At Montpellier," Griffuelhes complained, "they are pawns, not combatants." "At Narbonne, the socialist municipality [was] more interested in administration than in labor action." In that city, the bourse du travail was located in the mairie. How could class war be waged effectively, Griffuelhes asked in disgust, when the workers "call the mayor comrade." (44)

The forces of reaction stubbornly persisted. The effect of the ducs' preachings in favor of traditionalism and the socialists' concurrence on the sanctity of the smallholder's land spelled the increase in superstition, big government, statism, and the enhancement of those atavistic virtues of materialism and competitiveness. However much attention they might devote to the Bourbonnais country workers, professed Léopold Bernard, the militants must realize that the Bourbon métayers had "only one dream: to be a proprietor." (45) The peasant's continued "passion for his little plot of ground," said Paul Ader, militant secretary of the Fédération Agricole du Midi in 1912, "will thwart all our action, it will ruin all our efforts, it will destroy all our work of social action." (46)

The peasant's passion for land ownership impeded the growth of the revolution. It also contributed to the terrible inflation plaguing industrial workers by 1910. High import duties on agricultural products, particularly wheat, were the result of politicians' efforts to curry favor with the peasantry. Rising food prices were not caused by bad harvests or grain shortages, explained Léon Jouhaux in La Voix du Peuple. High import duties meant that foreign grains were not competitive, and French farmers could speculate to their ease. While not wishing to see "a fratricidal struggle between the rural and urban populations, nor cities arrayed against the country," Jouhaux declared, nevertheless unionists must demand respite from "the caprices and exigencies" of the large and middle agriculturalists. (47) Delegates to the 1912 CGT congress at Le Havre also complained of the high cost of living. The major blame for inflation, they agreed, was the creation of international cartels and trusts. But the poor organization of the industrial and agrarian sectors at home was also a contributor. There were several courses open to them. They could tighten their belts or they could carry on an economic war against the farmers by boycotting high-priced foods. (48)

At the same time that party socialism and conservative

unionism seemed to be gaining ground, revolutionary syndicalism appeared to be losing the 'battle in the countryside. Before 1912 four federations of agricultural workers unions had adhered to the CGT, and three other large federations--the Horticulturists of the Midi, the Vineyard Workers of Champagne, and the Resin-Tappers and Agriculturists of the Landes--had tacitly united by voicing acceptance of CGT principles. Despite such victories, by 1913 membership in the militant rural unions was on the wane. Many of the 628 farmworkers' unions listed by the Labor Ministry at the end of 1912 were only paper organizations. In numerous others, only the secretaries were active.(49)

To a certain degree, the decline of radical agrarian unionism was due to factors outside the militants' control. The gradual easing of population pressures in the countryside because of declining birthrates and rural migration evident in the prewar years may have had a psychological effect in diluting labor militancy. Since there was no apparent increase in large scale farming during this same period, according to Gordon Wright, the phenomenon of rural depopulation carried with it the prospect of land for the landless and increased holdings for those wishing to rise up the social and economic ladder.(50) The success or failure of rural strikes also played a part in diffusing agrarian militancy. As with his urban counterpart, during times of crisis the farmer was eager to associate to achieve his demands. After the strike was ended, however, either he could not afford union dues or he could see no tangible reason to continue to feed the union's treasury when the organization seemingly offered him nothing for his philanthropy. Of course, syndicalist leaders agreed with Augé-Laribé, who noted in 1907 that 'if a lowering of wages provoked a new round of strikes, all the unions which today appear disunited would reform immediately.'(51) That knowledge gave small comfort to the realization that the lack of revenue constituted a serious check to unionism's rural offensive.

Some of the inherent tendencies in syndicalism also mitigated against unionism's effective organizational growth among the peasantry. For one thing, syndicalism's antielectoral stand was often rejected by the peasantry. As Tony Judt notes in his study of the Var, voting was often the only avenue of protest for peasants and small-town artisans.(52) For another, the anarchist penchant for eschewing any structural force, preferring to rely instead on spontaneous organization, oftentimes prevented the militants from seizing the advantage. The strikes of 1904-1905 were clearly of an economic nature, noted Michel Augé-Laribé. Yet the local bourse generally waited to be called in by the peasant groups instead of taking advantage of the situation by leading the peasant movement. This lack of action caused Augé-Laribé to conjecture that the CGT had little understanding of rural strikes.(53)

Syndicalists often lost ground because of their

insistence on gaining support for things about which the peasantry cared little and understood less. A great deal of effort was expended to gain approval for the principle of the general strike at the Agricultural Workers' Congress at Narbonne in 1904. Undoubtedly the CGT representatives took pleasure in their victory, gained by changing the language of the resolution to read "general strike of the corporation, an economic and not a social strike" so as to appeal to the peasants' understanding of corporatism and to allay their suspicions against anything that smacked of social revolution. But one can only wonder about the efficacy of the syndicalist leaders' tactics among this group of farmworkers, unaligned with the CGT, who chose to demonstrate the degree of their radicalism by hanging a red flag in the meeting room and refusing to send a letter of condolence to Waldeck-Rousseau's widow! (54)

The commitment to the principle of collectivization, when it was discussed at all, was another barrier to the successful penetration of the countryside by anarchosyndicalism. Griffuelhes might insist in the CGT's 1912 Encyclopédie that syndicalism would not be moved to support a union of peasant proprietors and agrarian wage earners any more than it would countenance a union of petty shopkeepers and industrial workers. (55) But others rejected this hardline stance, suggesting a tactic of expediency in the battle for peasant hearts and minds. In 1908 a unionized teacher submitted an article to La Voix du Peuple reiterating the need to convince the peasantry to support the workers' movement. Effective propaganda would lessen the traditional hostility of the peasant toward the militant workers, whom the peasant regarded as "parasites and malcontents." Workers must understand that the peasant is not an idealist. "Exhortations to solidarity," the writer noted, were empty proclamations to the peasant. Syndicalism's tactic must be to show the concrete material gains to be derived from peasant support of unionism. Syndicalist's agrarian message, the writer suggested, must be:

Brother peasant, we wish to free you, to liberate you. This land to which you are attached, we leave to you, to free you. The product of your labor will be integrally . . . left to your disposition, these machines which you envy, the industrial unions will place freely in your hands so that your creative work will cost less sweat. [The unions] will construct large farmhouses for you, ventilated, furnished to perfection with those things supplying health and well-being. As for the rapacious proprietor, he will no longer have the right and power to estrange you from the least portion of your profits.

By exalting unionism's "faith in holy labor" and proclaiming "their esteem for all producers"--and by apparently speaking to the stubborn materialism of the peasantry--the writer promised; the countryside would be theirs.(56)

THE QUESTION REMAINS A PARADOX

In attempting to resolve the peasant question, revolutionary syndicalists found themselves in the prewar years impaled with the party socialists on the horns of a dilemma. A stubborn insistence on remaining loyal to collectivism guaranteed that farmers would find little attraction for the left. Yet without peasant solidarity, the revolution would fail. That knowledge had caused party socialists to adopt some effective techniques to make their message more palatable. To win elections, they had softened the "maximalist" stance of no-nonsense expropriation by supporting a "minimalist" program of agrarian legislative reforms. Further, while the party center continued to espouse Marxian determinism, local chiefs were often able to make Marxian collectivism sound like Proudhonian mutualism.(57) On the practical level, the only way open for syndicalists to gain peasants' support was through direct action: encouraging unionism and strike activity. While this tactic was often successful--both strikes and unions did increase--the method to achieve these ends was slow, difficult to control, and certainly not so flashy as the socialist and conservative politicians' promises for legislative reforms. Unless some improvement in the farmers' condition occurred, however, there would be little to stop the rural exodus to the cities. If farm incomes did not rise, disgruntled peasants would leave the land for the cities or the army--twin anathemas to the industrial worker. In addition, the drain of farmworkers impelled those who remained on the land to mechanize their production.(58) Mechanization increased the farmer's indebtedness and hence, his misery. But it also increased for the consumer the price of the farmer's products. It was a terrible irony syndicalists came to realize: the unions' intercession might bring greater well being for the peasant; but his shorter work day and higher wages contributed to inflation and another round of labor violence in the cities.(59)

In the early years of revolutionary syndicalism, the peasant question had been regarded as a practical response to reality: without peasant solidarity the revolution would fail; unless peasants kept out of the cities, workers' wages would fall. In terms of the organizational struggle, the attempts made to deal with the peasantry provided the syndicalists with a needed rallying point for the CGT's survival, both after the Guesdist walkout and in the light of Pelloutier's boycott of the organization. Further, the unions' rural offensive to gain support of the general strike bolstered syndicalism's radical and revolutionary

posture, helped to delineate the movement from party socialism, and in that way, continued to attract to its folds dedicated militants interested in pursuing economic means to their liberation.

It became increasingly apparent that the ideological goal of collectivism could not be squared with the peasants' stubborn materialism. Syndicalism's response to the peasant question was the articulation of a triple agenda: to group rural workers around a program of immediate reform and distant social transformation; to work toward stemming the rural exodus by ameliorating the workers' condition in the countryside; and to prepare the entente for the future revolution.(60) Even with the attempt to mask collectivization in the rhetoric of "a distant social transformation," the CGT's rural offensive seemed impossible to implement, or worse, appeared to have opposite results.(61) The effort to group all the workers of the fields, the woods, and the vineyards around a single program was exceedingly difficult given the increasing diversity of this population.(62) The goal of improving the farmworkers' conditions so as to halt the rural exodus seemed fraught with complications for the urban consumer. The commitment to prepare the entente of all for the coming revolution was becoming to many an impossible task. With the realization that the peasant problem was not a question but a paradox, some expedient had to be found to bridge the gap between the city and the country.

An article by Gustave Hervé in a 1907 issue of La Guerre Sociale seemed to presage the tactic that the CGT would come to use increasingly. During times of unemployment, when the city worker begged in the country for a scrap of bread and a barn corner in which to sleep, the peasants always had exclaimed that the city workers were "sluggards" and malcontents. When the urban proletariat demanded an eight-hour day, the peasant always smugly asserted that he worked from sunup to sundown. When the workers resorted to violence, the peasant indignantly demanded that the government take strong action against these disturbers of the peace. "Now you are in misery and seek direct action," Hervé chided, "and they shoot you down as at Fourmies, Châlon, and Limoges." It was foolish for the farmers to believe that government could reform a society that was inherently evil. Why did the peasant continue to insist on the perpetuation of a system based on individualism and competition, a system that set apart the consumer and the producer, when each could work together to assure abundance for all. When the city workers begin the revolution, Hervé queried of his hypothetical peasant reader, will you be "inert, or will you leave your sons, who are at the barracks, to deal with the malefactors?"(63)

Syndicalists had tried to hold fast to the idea of the revolution occurring by the Marxian formula of capitalist concentration of industry and in the countryside. Not wishing to trust the revolution to chance, they sought to help it along by means of direct action. But propaganda

appealing to the concept of human solidarity was too abstract for the unlettered and unsophisticated peasantry. Attempts made at social education were often useless for farmers who possessed only a rudimentary education. They tended to be disinterested in reading at bourse libraries and became restless during union-sponsored lectures. Stirring oratory might inflame the peasant for the moment, but he would quickly become disinterested when he understood what commitment to revolution meant, or when his wife nagged him for donating even a penny to the city slickers, who would take his money and run.(64) Union rhetoric and attempts at education were impractical when neither the peasant nor the factory worker trusted each other. Realistically, no grounds for trust existed, since each side understood that any increase in the other's well-being would be at its own expense. How then to design a campaign to weld the disparate elements in the countryside with the urban proletariat? The answer appears to have been arrived at instinctively rather than consciously, the way so much of revolutionary syndicalism's tactics were derived: by the practical need to find the most effective way to address its constituency. The bridge to the peasantry for anarchosyndicalism lay in the use of antimilitarist propaganda.

In the face of the increasing employment of the military to suppress labor's demands, the advent of universal military training which drew proportionately larger numbers of peasants into the barracks, and the escalating international tensions that bespoke the eventuality of a capitalist imperialist war, the syndicalists found the practical expedient they needed for the inclusion of the country into their propaganda campaign. In 1920 E. Martin Saint-Léon mused on the differences existing between urban and rural syndicalism. Despite their utterances regarding their alleged preference for pragmatic action, Saint-Léon noted, urban unionists were more ideological than were members of agrarian syndicats. Farmers did not dream of changing the whole world, he concluded; the dreams of their union leaders therefore were less grandiose.(65) The increased use of antimilitarist propaganda would certainly belie the notion that urban unionists were awash in a sea of ideology.

Instead, antimilitarism was infinitely practical. It pointed out to the peasantry the duplicity of the state, thereby serving to check the statism and patriotism of both the right and left. It was a practical and effective way to appeal to the patriarchal nature of peasant society and to bring women to union militancy. Those were mothers' boys being taken away for cannon fodder; those were peasant sons being forced to turn their rifles on their fathers and brothers. The antimilitarist campaign struck a responsive chord and awakened the long tradition of peasant opposition to recruitment. Antimilitarism became a practical metaphor for solidarity: unofficially, with the socialists, who after 1911 adopted a more overtly antimilitarist posture, and

between agrarian and urban workers, who were shot down by the same bullets and maimed by the same sabres.(66) The exploited of the town and country were joined in suffering against the same evil and in the interest of justice. Propaganda for an eight-hour day had little relevance to the farmer who worked his own land; the idea of the general strike was too abstract. Far from being ideological, the use of the tactic of antimilitarist propaganda by revolutionary syndicalists was a practical instrument--and seemingly the only available tactic--directed toward narrowing the chasm that traditionally had existed between the city and the country.

NOTES

1. 6(e) congrès national des syndicats de France: Compte rend. des travaux du congrès . . . (Nantes, 1894), pp. 52-53.

2. Ibid., pp. 102-103.

3. Ibid., pp. 54-57.

4. Ibid., p. 105.

5. Ibid., pp. 104-105.

6. Ibid., p. 100.

7. Ibid., p. 74.

8. Ibid., p. 40. See André May, Les origines du syndicalisme révolutionnaire (Paris, 1913), p. 84 for quote.

9. 6(e) congrès [Nantes, 1894], p. 52.

10. R. E. Matillon, Les syndicats ouvriers dans l'agriculture (Paris, 1908), pp. 22-24.

11. Fernand Pelloutier, Histoire des bourses du travail (Paris, 1902), pp. 204-214.

12. XI(e) congrès national corporatif (V(e) de la confédération générale du travail) . . . (Paris, 1900), p. 71.

13. Ibid., pp. 72-73. At the 1894 Nantes congress, Treich had spoken out in opposition to the general strike, fearing that its adoption as an instrument of direct action would repulse the agrarian segments of the population. See Sylvain Humbert, Le mouvement syndical (Paris, 1912), p. 23.

14. XI(e) congrès [Paris, 1900], p. 73.

15. Ibid., p. 77.
16. Ibid., pp. 77-78.
17. Ibid., pp. 73-75.
18. Ibid., p. 80.
19. Ibid., pp. 73-74.
20. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
21. Ibid., p. 79.
22. Ibid., p. 76.
23. Ibid., p. 82.

24. XIII(e) congrès national corporatif . . . Compte rendu officiel des travaux du congrès, publié par les soins de la commission d'organisation, (Montpellier, 1902), pp. 204-205.

25. Ibid., pp. 205-206.
26. Ibid., p. 206.
27. Ibid., pp. 208-209.
28. Ibid., pp. 241-243.
29. Ibid., pp. 223-231.
30. Ibid., pp. 209-210.

31. At these demonstrations, dragoons had to be called in. The result was a partial success. Workers received an eight-hour day and a higher ration of wine. In Confédération Générale du Travail. La confédération générale du travail et le mouvement syndical (Paris, 1925), p. 310. [Hereafter referred to as La CGT et le mouvement syndical.]

32. XIV(e) congrès national corporatif (VIII(e) de la confédération) et conférence des bourses du travail, . . . Compte rendu des travaux (Bourges, 1904), pp. 202-204 for Mauger's comments.

33. At Amiens in 1906 delegates were too concerned with adopting a *modus vivendi* by which unity could be achieved. The only reference to the agrarian issue occurred over a rather perfunctory issue concerning membership of those farm unions located too far from the union halls of the mother unions. XV(e) congrès national corporatif (IX(e) de la confédération) et conférence des bourses du

travail . . . Compte rendu des travaux (Amiens, 1906), p. 197.

34. La Voix du Peuple, 23 Dec. 1900, 6 Jan., 20 Jan., 3 Mar., 7 Jul., 18 Aug., 29 Sept. 1901.

35. Ibid., 9 Nov. 1902.

36. Ibid., 12 Apr. 1903.

37. Ibid., 10 Jan. 1904.

38. Ibid., 7 Feb. 1904.

39. Ibid., 30 June 1907.

40. Ibid., 11 Apr. 1909.

41. Statistics of the 1912 membership figures in the proprietary unions appear in an article on the subject by Léon de Seilhac in Victor Griffuelhes and Léon Jouhaux, eds., Encyclopédie du mouvement syndicaliste (Paris, 1912), p. 45. They numbered 5,407 unions representing 912,944 men and 15,592 women.

42. The tenth legislative election was an indication to Amédée Dunois, writing on the agrarian question in Griffuelhes and Jouhaux, eds., Encyclopédie du mouvement syndicaliste, that the socialist program was propagating rapidly in the countryside. p. 34.

43. Léopold Bernard, Les idées révolutionnaires dans la campagne du bourbonnais (Paris, 1911), p. 30. Tony Judt would disagree that peasants voted socialist out of ignorance, at least in the Var. He claims that the collectivist implication of socialism was what made it attractive to many Varois peasants. Socialism in Provence 1871-1914. A Study in the Origins of the Modern French Left (Cambridge, 1979), p. 96.

44. Victor Griffuelhes, Voyage révolutionnaire (Paris, 1911), pp. 31-33.

45. Bernard, Les idées révolutionnaires, p. 28. There were other groups springing up in the countryside that competed with revolutionary syndicalism for members. One such association formed during the peasant disorders in the Midi in 1907. It was led by Marcellin Albert, himself a vintner, who attracted crowds of up to one-half million with his harangues. Albert led a taxpayers' strike, resulting in the mass resignations of mayors and town councils in several hundred communes. When troops could not put down the rising violence, Albert was summoned to Paris and given a hundred franc note by Clemenceau to return home. While the bribe may have cooled Albert's evangelistic fervor, it apparently

did not scueh his desire for reform. Albert was subsequently instrumental in forming the Confédération Générale des Vignerons du Midi as a lobbying organization supporting vintners' interests. See Gordon Wright, Rural Revolution in France: The Peasantry in the Twentieth Century (Stanford, 1964), pp. 27-28.

46. Paul Ader, "Agricole du Midi," in Griffuelhes and Jouhaux, eds., Encyclopédie du mouvement syndicaliste, p. 37.

47. La Voix du Peuple, 12 May 1912.

48. XVIII(e) congress [Le Havre, 1912], reported in La CGT et le mouvement syndical, pp. 123-124.

49. Michel Augé-Laribé, Le paysan français après la guerre (Paris, 1923), p. 193. See also Le problème agraire du socialisme (Paris, 1907) by the same author, pp. 308-309 for the decrease in unionism. See for statistics on agrarian unions supportive of syndicalism: Confédération Générale du Travail. La confédération générale du travail et les terriens (Paris, 1919), pp. 12-14.

50. Wright, Rural Revolution in France, p. 16. Augé-Laribé notes that in 1923 the peasant hierarchy was still based on quantity of landholdings. Le paysan français après la guerre, pp. 190-191.

51. Augé-Laribé, Le problème agraire du socialisme, pp. 304 and 355 for quote.

52. Judt, Socialisme in Provence, p. 98.

53. Augé-Laribé, Le problème agraire du socialisme, p. 280.

54. M. Augé-Laribé, "Deuxième congrès des syndicats d'ouvriers agricoles," Annales du Musée Social, 9 (Sept. 1904): 394-401.

55. Griffuelhes and Jouhaux, eds., Encyclopédie du mouvement syndicaliste p. 19.

56. La Voix du Peuple, 27 Dec. 1908.

57. Judt., Socialism in Provence, p. 234. Philippe Gratton notes, on the other hand, that the leaders of agrarian unionism were far more radical than the masses they were seeking to represent. Les luttes des classes dans les campagnes (Paris, 1971), p. 306.

58. Georges Dupeux, French Society 1789-1970, Peter Wait, trans. (London, 1975), pp. 162-163.

59. André Marchal attributes the rise in labor violence to the increased cost of living, Le mouvement syndical en France (Paris, 1945), p. 150.

60. The CGT's program appears in the article by Amedée Dunols in Griffuelhes and Jouhaux, eds., Encyclopédie du mouvement syndicaliste, p. 34.

61. Augé-Laribé, Le paysan français après la guerre, p. 200.

62. Gratton, Les luttes des classes, p. 305.

63. La Guerre Sociale, the edition following that of 23 May 1907 in which neither the date nor the edition is readable. In that same issue Hervé observed that the 101st regiment, stationed at the Narbonne barracks in the Midi, had refused to march on their fathers and friends.

64. See Michel Bernard's assessment of the peasants in the Allier in La CGT et les terriens, pp. 31-34.

65. E. Martin Saint-Léon, Syndicalisme ouvrier et syndicalisme agricole (Paris, 1920), p. 146.

66. For a discussion of the response by international socialism and the question of antimilitarist activity see Georges Haupt, Socialism and the Great War: The Collapse of the Second International (Oxford, 1972).

PERSONS CITED

Ader, Paul (1877-1918), born in the Ariège, died at sea. A syndicalist of libertarian tendencies, and one interested in organizing the rural proletariat. He was involved in founding and leading an agricultural workers' federation in the Midi. Assisted at numerous CGT congresses, and edited two rural working-class newspapers. He also contributed to other radical papers. He directed all the large strikes in the Aude, Hérault, Gard, Pyrénées-Orientales, and Bouches-du-Rhône. He was an antimilitarist, a supporter of the general strike and sabotage, and he opposed the SFIO. Mobilized in 1914, Ader became a partisan of national defense.

Beaujardin, H (1866-1928), born in the Lot-et-Garonne. Wrote in numerous journals, particularly those aimed at rural propaganda. Collaborated on Père Peinard. He became a militant communist after 1920.

Bourderon, Albert (1858-1930), born in the Loiret, died at Paris. The son of a small proprietor, he worked as a domestique de ferme, and later as a cooper. In Paris he

joined the Allemanists and ran in numerous municipal elections. He supported socialist unification, but was the founder and guiding light of the coopers' union and federation. He was an advocate of cooperatives, and founded a number of these organizations. He opposed the Union sacrée and went with Merrheim to Zimmerwald. Under the influence of Wilsonianism, he eventually slid toward the center. He voted to exclude the minority from the CGT in 1921, but remained on the left of the Confederation after the schism.

Bourguier (?-?), born in 1871 at Rheims. He was a weaver and militant anarchist. He was jailed and fined in 1892 for preaching insubordination to recruits. He attended CGT and FBT congresses. In 1907 he was condemned to hard labor for some crime, and he subsequently fled to the United States.

Bousquet, [Jean] Amédée (1867-1925), born in the Gironde, died in Paris. A baker and secretary of the Foodworkers' Union. He was first a Guesdist, then an Independent Socialist. Ran in numerous municipal elections. He campaigned against night work and participated in numerous CGT congresses. He was imprisoned for his strike activity, being charged over eight times during his lifetime for radicalism. In 1912 Bousquet became a baker in a cooperative bakery in the XVIII(e) arrondissement. He joined the CGTU in the last years of his life.

Brunellière, Charles (1847-1917), born and died at Nantes. He was the son of a tradesman. He left school at the age of fifteen to work in a grocery store, and later became a naval rigging maker. He created the Maritime Federation of Brittany. He married and fathered five children. His family often suffered as a result of his political activities. He joined the POF, although he was an antimilitarist. Brunellière collaborated on numerous socialist papers. An incredible organizer, he took a vital part in unionism and participated in all the municipal elections. He was also very active in organizing farmworkers. When war came, he supported the Union sacrée, believing that it was a vehicle for achieving unity of the leftist sects.

Chiron, Victor (1853-?), born in Deux-Sèvres, died in the Vendée. A watchmaker and militant socialist in Brest. He started a socialist group during his military service. He was involved in strike activity and demonstrations demanding amnesty for the Communards. He founded the Study Circle of Brest, which was the center of the avant-garde group in the region. He attended numerous bourses and CGT congresses. He was elected to the Municipal Council and edited several socialist newspapers.

Davin (?-?), lived in Algeria and was active in both the Confederal and Socialist Party congresses.

Desplanques, Charles (1877-?), born in the Department of the Seine. He was a hairdresser, an anarchist, and held numerous administrative posts in his union and federation. He was elected undersecretary to Yvetot for the FBT. Although imprisoned and fined for his antimilitarist activities, he was mobilized during the war. After serving as a hospital attendant, when the war ended, Desplanques was no longer a militant unionist.

Farjat, Gabriel (1857-1930), born at Lyon, died at Paris. He was born into a family of silk weavers. At eleven, he began working with his father, but he continued his education by reading. His knowledge made him a powerful force in the Lyonnais socialist movement. He was one of the founders of the POF, but he also participated in union and bourse activities. Farjat worked on a Guesdist newspaper after 1891. When the paper ceased publication, Farjat had serious financial problems until he was admitted into the union of the P.T.T.

Farras, Charles (1852-1929), born and died in the Hérault. He was a militant republican, farmworker, member of the POF, and founder of a farmworkers' union. Although fired for his activities, he continued to direct strikes, write radical tracts, and campaign against reactionaries in the municipal government. After 1900 Farras became director of a bourse, working to create various unions during his tenure of office. After 1904 he withdrew from bourse and Socialist Party activity.

Fribourg, Paul (1868-?), born in Paris. Railroad worker and militant in the POSR. He supported the general strike and participated in numerous CGT conferences.

Hervier, Pierre (1869-1952), born in the Cher. While apprenticing as a linen weaver, he organized a union. After fulfilling his military obligation, he became very involved in syndicalism, particularly in antimilitarist activities. Hervier participated in CGT congresses and organized the woodcutters' union. He was a political socialist, and served on the Municipal Council of Bourges. He supported the government during the war, and the Third International after the schism.

Lelorrain (?-?) belonged to the first bureau of the National Federation of Tobacco Workers. He supported proportional representation.

Mauger, Hippolyte (1857-1946), born and died in the Cher. He was a woodcutter who entered into socialist activities at a young age. He helped found a woodcutters' union. He was finally elected as a Deputy, then a Senator from the Cher. In parliament Mauger was always concerned with farm problems. He defended the Union sacrée, and was excluded

from the SFIO in 1919 for his support of the Versailles Treaty.

Milhaud, Baptiste (?-?), he was a delegate to the CGT congresses and to the congress of the Fédération des Agricoles du Midi in 1903. During the 1904 strikes, Milhaud organized union propaganda. He was a bourse secretary from 1907 to 1913.

Noel, Emile, (1866-1938), born at Bordeaux, died at Tours. He was a son of an illiterate republican. At the age of ten he apprenticed to a lithographer, and joined the union at sixteen. In 1889 he ran unsuccessfully for the Municipal Council as a member of the POF. He was a bourse secretary. In 1891 Noel was fired from his job for his radical activities. He was very active in agrarian syndicalism, and formed numerous farm unions. He supported the general strike, cooperatives, and the UP's. During the war he was general secretary of the Freethinkers' Federation.

Reisz, Eugène (1863-1921), born and died in Paris. He was a militant socialist, an elected member of the Municipal Council, involved in a Paris cooperative, and a delegate to numerous CGT congresses. From 1904-1912 he was an administrator of a cooperative.

Trévaux, Louis (?-1908), shoemaker, socialist revolutionary from the Lorient, bourse manager, who participated in numerous CGT congresses.

Voillot, Jean (1874-1953), born at Nièvre. He entered his father's trade as a carpenter. He was an excellent orator and organizer. He advocated separation of syndicalism from party socialism, even though he was himself a member of the POF and later the SFIO. He later became a Deputy and Senator from the Rhone.